

CONCERNING THE RECONSTRUCTION OF 'THE ARAMAIC GOSPELS'

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I. TORREY'S TRANSLATION OF THE GOSPELS.

IT is sometimes maintained that the four gospels as they have come down to us are straightforward translations of Aramaic originals, with the exception, indeed, of a few small portions. Recently this view has found a brilliant and highly competent advocate in C. C. Torrey. It is not the present writer's object to investigate this vast problem, though it may be permissible to express respectful disagreement. Certainly, it is highly unlikely that Jesus used Greek when talking to his disciples or preaching; or even that he knew a great deal of Greek. (This point has perhaps received too little attention from those who have speculated upon the trial of Jesus before Pilate. That scene will appear none the less pathetic if we assume the presence of an interpreter.) There must, therefore, have existed a nucleus of sayings and stories in Aramaic. But it has been convincingly argued that Greek versions of these, or many of these, were current from an early date and were used by the evangelists or even their sources. Probably some narratives and sayings to be found in the gospels were in Greek from the outset. The truth seems to be that the problem does not admit of a uniform solution to be stated in a few words. The proportion of Aramaic, Greek and other elements (for there are others, among which Hebrew is prominent) varies from one pericope to the next and, quite often, one verse to the next. As for the Aramaic gold, while that may here and there be almost on the surface, as a rule we have to dig through several layers (some of them deep and hard enough to render the work laborious) to reach it; and not infrequently we shall toil all in vain, much

¹ The author wishes to thank Professor F. S. Marsh for criticism and advice.

as did those inhabitants of the shores of the Rhine who, fascinated as 'the midnight moon did lave her forehead in the silver wave', searched their river for the legendary treasure of the *Nibelungen*.

Here a much narrower subject will be discussed. Torrey has given us a new English translation of the gospels,¹ a translation based on the theory mentioned at the beginning of this paper; and he has explained his deviations from previous renderings not only in numerous notes appended to this translation but also in a separate, more recent work.² In the latter he classifies his deviations, in order to show what kinds of mistakes we have to expect in a Greek work coming direct from the Aramaic. It may be said to be the purpose of the following remarks to point out some of the mistakes that we have to expect in a work like Torrey's. More precisely, Torrey, for whom the gospels are immediate versions of Aramaic originals, is inclined to blame the translator into Greek for any difficulties in the text before us; inclined to solve any problems by alleging that the Aramaic was in order, only the translator into Greek misunderstood it. This procedure has its great dangers, whether Torrey's main thesis is tenable or not. No doubt some passages in the gospels may owe their present form to mistranslation of an Aramaic original. But it is easy to exaggerate and, except for certain particularly favourable cases, impossible to achieve reconstructions that can be regarded as authoritative. A phrase that looks odd at first sight may yet turn out to be in its proper place, on close examination of, say, the Rabbinic background: if we assume mistranslation in such a case, we shall only have made the text suit our modern notions instead of arriving at its true meaning. And who knows enough about the Aramaic of first century Palestine, the little personal peculiarities in the Aramaic of, say, the hypothetical Aramaic Matthew and those in the Aramaic of the man who made him into Greek to be able to reconstruct with authority? The writer happens to have seen a large number of reconstructions of texts from the Digest supposed to have suffered under the hands of Tribonian,

¹ C. C. Torrey, *The Four Gospels*.

² C. C. Torrey, *Our Translated Gospels*.

Justinian's minister of justice, when he compiled that code from the works of the famous jurists of the first two and a half centuries. But it is greatly to be feared that few of them would cause the original authors anything but annoyance. Yet the task is considerably less complicated than in the case of the gospels, since both Tribonian and the classical jurists whose works he handled wrote in Latin. (The great Roman lawyer Otto Lenel, in the course of discussing similar questions, pointed out that of the German synonyms *da* and *weil*, the former was to be found hundreds of times in his own writings, the latter hardly at all: an interesting and by no means unique example of personal preference for one of two equally good words.) The pitfalls here referred to are only a few out of a great many in the way of him who would rely chiefly on the possibility of mistranslation in dealing with difficulties in the gospels. This is not saying that no account should be taken of that possibility. Far from it. It remains an undoubted merit of Torrey's to have revived interest in a method too often neglected. What it is sought to demonstrate is, first, that only good can come of a certain reluctance to assume mistranslations,¹ and secondly, that reconstructions are apt to go wrong. Unfortunately, even where one does not agree with an explanation by Torrey, it is often impossible to disprove it. In Aramaic, sometimes, the same words may express either a declaration or a question. Torrey says that in Luke 16:8 f., the Aramaic signified 'Did the lord of the estate praise his faithless manager?', and that it was the translator into Greek who is responsible for the troublesome 'And the lord commended the unjust steward'.² The present writer prefers the traditional version, just because it is so inconvenient, but this means only that he does not approve of Torrey's suggestion, not that he has refuted it. Nevertheless there are cases where Torrey's treatment can at least be shown to be very problematic, and it is to a discussion of some of these that the following pages will be devoted.

¹ The present writer himself has sinned against this principle in *Expository Times*, 50, pp. 138 f., though he has made it clear that his treatment of Mark 2:4 and Luke 5:19 is not meant to provide more than a conceivable solution of a difficulty which may not exist.

² *The Four Gospels*, pp. 157 and 311; *Our Translated Gospels*, pp. 56, 59f.

This inquiry, then, is not concerned with the wider question whether or not the four gospels are straightforward translations of Aramaic originals. Two points, however, may be noted. For one thing, should it be possible to prove mistaken significant explanations of Torrey, one's view of his main thesis will inevitably be affected, in however slight a degree. For another thing, even where something like a mistranslation appears established, we must remember that it may have occurred at a stage of the tradition far prior to the evangelist-translator; frequently, it may have occurred before any translation was made, so that we ought to think of misinterpretation of an Aramaic passage by one who handed it on in Aramaic rather than of mistranslation of an Aramaic passage by one who handed it on in Greek. According to Matthew 14:2, Mark 6:14, 'the powers work in him (John the Baptist)'. Torrey contends that the Aramaic used a form which, if written without vowels, could mean this or 'the deeds are worked by him' (passive); that, in this context, only the latter meaning can have been intended; and that the translator into Greek mistranslated.¹ But even if the first two steps of this argument are conceded, there is nothing to prevent us from assuming that it was at the Aramaic stage itself that the form was misunderstood and replaced by one signifying only 'the powers work in him' (active). It follows that even where something like a mistranslation appears established, special evidence is required if we are to be certain that it was the evangelist-translator himself who committed the mistake. A fair proportion of the mistranslations alleged by Torrey, even if believed in, are not of the type that can be ascribed only to the last or, indeed, to any translator into Greek. However, as the wider issue is not raised in this paper, this consideration will not be pursued. The object of these reflections, as already stated, is quite unambitious: to demonstrate that much care should be exercised in inferring mistranslations and attempting reconstructions.

¹ *The Four Gospels*, pp. 31, 81, 293 and 299; *Our Translated Gospels*, pp. 98 f.

II. MATTHEW 5:37.

Let us begin with Matthew 5:37. Torrey's allegation of a mistranslation is unfounded. An analysis of the Rabbinic background shows that the passage, if not superior to its parallel, James 5:12, is certainly not the result of clumsiness on the part of a translator.

Matthew 5:37, as it stands, says: 'But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay . . .'. Torrey substitutes: 'But let your word "yes" be yea, and your "nay" be nay . . .'. He remarks: 'The Greek follows the Aramaic exactly, word by word, but the result is mistranslation; the second occurrence of the "yea" or "nay" is in each case the predicate. James 5:12 has it right.'¹ But the matter is a little more complicated than that. True, we might readily conceive of an Aramaic original the meaning of which was as Torrey supposes, though it could also be interpreted (or rather, on this hypothesis, misinterpreted) in the way chosen by the Greek translator. True, James 5:12 has a version speaking for Torrey: 'But let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay'. Yet when we inspect the Rabbinic parallels, the result is strongly in favour of the Matthean text before us.

According to Matthew 5:33 ff., you have to avoid oaths; you may swear neither by heaven nor by the earth nor by Jerusalem nor by your head; and you may go no further—if we accept the traditional text—than an emphatic 'Yea, yea' or 'Nay, nay'. James 5:12 ends on a somewhat different note. You have to avoid oaths; you may swear neither by heaven nor by the earth nor by any other oath; the most ordinary assurance coming from you should be good enough. This 'let your yea be yea, and your nay be nay' Torrey takes as having been behind Matthew 5:37 as well. Now it is clear from the Rabbinic discussion of oaths that people were afraid to use the name of God; moreover, the better ones at least saw that swearing by God mostly showed a lack of true reverence. The name of God, therefore, was often replaced by attributes of God or the like. But as even these were feared and respected,

¹ *The Four Gospels*, pp. 11 and 291.

less and less solemn expressions might take the place of oaths. For this and other reasons, it became necessary to lay down which phrases constituted an oath and which did not. In Mishnah Shebuoth 4 : 13, for instance, it is provided that, for certain purposes, 'By heaven and by earth' is not an oath, but 'By the Merciful and Gracious' is. In the Babylonian Gemara attached to this Mishnah (Shebuoth 36a), R. Eleazar takes the view that a mere 'Yea' or 'Nay' may constitute an oath; whereas in Raba's opinion, a 'Yea, yea' or 'Nay, nay' is required.¹ It is worth noting that several examples of 'Yea, yea' and 'Nay, nay' being used for emphasis are quoted from Rabbinic sources by Strack-Billerbeck:² they were living expressions. Surely all this supplies a sufficient background to Matthew 5 : 37 even as it stands. You may not resort, this is the meaning of the passage, to any of the dodges usual in oaths : all you may do is to say 'Yea, yea' or 'Nay, nay'. And the conclusion that this verse is intended to give us the maximum formula permissible is confirmed by the second half : 'For whatever is more than these cometh of evil'.

As for the version in James 5 : 12, it is important to observe that the Rabbinic illustrations adduced by Strack-Billerbeck³ are none of them concerned, like Matthew and the sections from Shebuoth cited, with the proper mode of making binding declarations. In other words, none of them are concerned with the problem whether man, so small before God, has the right to take an oath, and what he can do if he has not. In the first case, R. Jose b. Judah comments on Leviticus 19 : 36 ('Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, shall ye have') : 'Your Nay shall be just and your Yea shall be just'. The second case is the same as the first, except for the additional remark by Abaye :

¹ These Rabbis, it seems, rather lost sight of the nature of an oath : for us, at any rate, an oath involves the invocation of a superior power. But in this as in every matter, the ultimate test, in the eyes of the Rabbis, was Scripture. As they found there, or thought they found there, mere confirmations and denials with the force of oaths, they regarded it as sufficiently proved that a simple 'Yea' or the like might be an oath. Compare also Philo, *Leg. All.* 3 : 72, 203 ff., and *De Sacr. Ab. et Cai.* 27 : 91 ff.

² See H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, vol. 1, pp. 336 ff.

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 336.

'You should not say one thing with your mouth and think another thing in your heart'. In the third case, R. Huna in the name of R. Samuel b. Isaac comments on Ruth 3 : 18 ('Then said she, Sit still, my daughter . . . for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day'): 'The Yea of the just is a Yea, and their Nay is a Nay'. In all three passages, that is, the theme is not the proper mode of making a binding declaration, but truthfulness and reliability. The two themes are closely related but not quite the same. In James 5 : 12 alone they appear to be combined: you may not swear by heaven, the earth or any other oath (this sounds like a reference to the proper mode of giving an assurance)—you may not go back on your mere confirmation or denial (this is an exhortation to be truthful and reliable). Instead of 'For whatever is more than these cometh of evil', we find the less specific 'Lest ye fall into condemnation'.

Dibelius indeed seems to think that James 5 : 12 is confined to the theme of honesty.¹ But this view can hardly be accepted. He relies on Pythagoras, but Pythagoras affords no real parallel. That sage, if we are to believe his biographers, 'forbade his disciples to swear by the gods, saying that every man ought so to exercise himself as to be worthy of belief without an oath' (Diogenes Laertius 8 : 22); and advised administrators to surpass the common citizens in nothing but justice, adding that 'it was proper that the senators should not make use of any of the gods for the purpose of an oath, but that their language should be such as to render them worthy of belief without oaths' (Jamblichus, *Vit. Pyth.* 47). This is a logical line of thought, belonging exclusively to the theme of truthfulness and reliability, but it is different from James 5 : 12. (It does recur, significantly, in Josephus' account of the Essenes, *De Bell. Jud.* 2 : 8 : 6, 135 : 'And while any word counts with them as stronger than an oath, they avoid swearing, deeming it worse than perjury; for he stands condemned from the very outset, they say, who cannot be trusted without an invocation of God'.²) James 5 : 12

¹ M. Dibelius, *Der Brief des Jakobus*, 7th ed., pp. 228 ff.

² Compare Philo, *Quod Omn. Prob. Lib.* 12 : 84: the Essenes, we are here told, attach the greatest importance to 'continued and uninterrupted purity throughout the whole of life, avoidance of oaths, avoidance of falsehood' etc.

does not contain only a plain warning not to swear and to stand by one's mere word. More precisely, it says not only 'Swear not', but 'Swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath'. This distinctly indicates that somewhere in the tradition underlying James stood the problem that is still prominent in Matthew, the problem of dodges (how far are they admissible? which of them constitute oaths? is there a way to do without them?); somewhere in that tradition stood the notion of the oath as abhorrent not because a man's mere assurance ought to be enough, but because God is to be feared and respected; somewhere, in brief, stood the discussion of the proper mode of making binding declarations. Only James 5:12, in contradistinction to Matthew 5:37, superimposes on this the theme of truthfulness and reliability: it concludes with an admonition to be honest. As a result, it is less compact than either Matthew 5:37 (the proper mode of making a binding declaration) or Pythagoras (honesty).

In view of this evidence, it is arguable that James 5:12 represents a later stage than Matthew 5:37. Matthew 5:37, we might hold, is slightly more precise. It tells us not to swear, not even with the help of dodges, but to use the formula 'Yea, yea' or 'Nay, nay': But let your communication be, 'Yea, yea; Nay, nay'. James 5:12 seems to draw an inference from this teaching. It tells us not to swear, not even with the help of dodges, but to make up by being truthful and reliable: 'But let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay'. Maybe the technical point of Matthew's 'Yea, yea' and 'Nay, nay' was no longer understood at a very early date. But this does not necessarily follow: the introduction into the saying of a general, moral maxim is nothing very surprising. However, there is no need here to decide between the claims of the two versions. The present writer inclines to prefer Matthew 5:37: for if the interpretation here attempted is tenable, it forms the conclusion of a homogeneous utterance concerning the proper mode of making a binding declaration, while James 5:12 gives the argument a twist so as to lead up to the command to be honest. Dibelius prefers James 5:12: for he regards it as a homogeneous utterance concerning honesty, and also as ethically

superior to the more legalistic Matthew 5 : 37.¹ (Some help might be got for the question from II Corinthians 1 : 17 ff., if that passage did not itself give rise to considerable difficulties.) In any case, the position is that we have one version in Matthew 5 : 37, strongly supported by Rabbinic analogy ; and another version in James 5 : 12, less strongly supported by Rabbinic analogy, though, according to Dibelius, to be paralleled from Pythagoras. Admittedly, there is here an awkward problem. But to assume a mistranslation in Matthew 5 : 37 and violently assimilate this text to James 5 : 12 is evading the problem, not solving it. It is, at bottom, doing the same thing with modern means that was done in a more primitive way by those ancient editors and scribes who simply corrected Matthew 5 : 37 after James 5 : 12 or James 5 : 12 after Matthew 5 : 37. A glance at the apparatus will show that quite a few, in the course of the centuries, made the two versions agree with one another. Let us not succumb to the temptation.

III. MARK 10 : 6.

Mark 10 : 6 uses a curious phrase, which Torrey ascribes to mistranslation. There exists so close an analogy, however, in Rabbinic literature that this view must be rejected. The difference between Mark 10 : 6 and its parallel, Matthew 19 : 4, cannot be dissolved by assuming clumsiness on the part of a translator.

Mark 10 : 6, in its present form, reads : ' But from the beginning of the creation, male and female made he them.' Torrey substitutes : ' At the beginning, the Creator made them

¹ The latter reason would seem peculiarly weak, though it is also given as decisive by E. Klostermann, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, 2nd ed., pp. 46 f. For one thing, the transformation of a saying with a legalistic point (Matthew) into one with a general, ethical point (James) is much more likely in this case than the reverse process ; yet it is the reverse process that Dibelius assumes. For another thing, is it right to label a version as finer merely because it makes a stronger appeal to the twentieth-century reader ? Certainly, James's admonition to be honest suits any modern system of ethics. But is it really finer than the advice to make binding declarations in the form of ' Yea, yea ' or ' Nay, nay ' only, if that advice springs (as it does in Matthew) from a genuine acknowledgement of the greatness of God, of God who alone is master of ' heaven, the earth, Jerusalem and thy head ' ?

male and female'. He remarks: 'The text of the verse began: *milqadmīn dī b'rā*, which might be rendered exactly as in Mark, the subject of the verb (God) being understood. But Matthew, who had the same text (with the words possibly transposed), rendered correctly. See Matthew 19:4, and the note there.¹ *Milqadmīn* is the regular Jewish Aramaic for "at the beginning".² Torrey further argues that the traditional text of Mark cannot be right, seeing that God made man not at the beginning of creation, but at the end.³

It must be admitted, first, that the Aramaic postulated by Torrey might well mean what he thinks it originally did; secondly, that it might well be translated, or rather, on his hypothesis, mistranslated in a way leading to the text as it stands; thirdly, that if we accept his correction, the troublesome difference between Mark 10:6 and Matthew 19:4 disappears; and fourthly, that man was the last, not the first, of God's works—at least to go by the plain sense of the Biblical story rather than certain Midrashic speculations. Torrey could even have added two further points. First, the view that the present Mark 10:6 must be due to mistranslation is not new. Wellhausen and Klostermann held it,⁴ though their Aramaic or Hebrew and, consequently, their original saying is vastly different from Torrey's; and on the basis of their reconstruction, the gulf between Mark 10:6 and Matthew 19:4 becomes even wider than it now is. (According to them, the Aramaic or Hebrew behind Mark 10:6 meant: 'At the beginning of the book of the creation, Moses wrote that male and female made he them'.) Secondly, the desire to make these two texts say exactly the same is not new. It has been suggested that Matthew 19:4 is corrupt and, at some stage, was absolutely identical with Mark 10:6.⁵

There are, then, a number of arguments in favour of Torrey's

¹ This note, to be found in *The Four Gospels*, p. 294, says: "'He who made" renders *dī b'rā*, which is the standing phrase for "the Creator". See note on Mark 10:6.'

² See *The Four Gospels*, pp. 91 and 302.

³ See *Our Translated Gospels*, pp. 3, 12, and 14.

⁴ See E. Klostermann, *Das Markusevangelium*, 2nd ed., pp. 110 f.

⁵ See M.-J. Lagrange, *Évangile selon Saint Matthieu*, 2nd ed., p. 367.

opinion ; yet those against it are stronger. The first point to make one doubtful is the existence of another passage where Mark uses the term 'from the beginning of the creation' while Matthew does not. Mark 13 : 19 says : 'For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation.' Matthew 24 : 21 says : 'For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world.'¹ It is true that this time there is no difference in meaning between the evangelists, and also that whereas man, according to the plain Biblical story, was not made 'in the beginning of the creation' (which Mark 10 : 6 in its traditional form might be taxed with overlooking), it is perfectly natural to speak of troubles more fearful than any 'since the beginning of the creation' (so that Mark 13 : 19 is safe on this account). Still, the fact remains that here is another instance where Mark alone employs just this phrase, and where a mistranslation of the kind assumed by Torrey in the case of 10 : 6 is out of the question.

A far more serious consideration is that *mitt'hilath b'riyyatho shel 'olam*, 'from the beginning of his creation of the world', is a frequent expression in Rabbinic discourses on the creation. Sometimes, indeed, the phrase is used in its most literal sense. This happens particularly where God's perfect knowledge of everything to come is emphasised. In Genesis Rabba 2 we are told : 'R. Abbahu taught, From the beginning of his creation of the world the Holy one saw the deeds of the righteous and the deeds of the wicked ; according to Psalm 1 : 6, For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish ; or according to Genesis 1 : 2 f., And the earth was without form and void—these are the deeds of the wicked, And God said, Let there be light—these are the deeds of the righteous R. Hiyya the Elder taught, From the beginning of his creation of the world the Holy one saw the temple built, destroyed and re-built ; according to Genesis 1 : 1 ff., In the beginning God created—this is the temple built (with Isaiah 51 : 16, That I may plant the heavens . . . and say unto Zion, Thou art my people) ; And the earth was without

¹ Compare also Matthew 25 : 34 : 'Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world'.

form and void—this is the temple destroyed (with Jeremiah 4 : 23 ff., I beheld the earth, and lo, it was without form and void . . . I beheld, and lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness) ; And God said, Let there be light—this is the temple re-built (with Isaiah 60 : 1 f., Arise, shine, for thy light is come . . . For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth . . . But the Lord shall arise upon thee).’ Here, with God seeing the end as he sets to work, we are not very far from Fitzgerald’s ‘Yea, the First Morning of Creation wrote What the Last Dawn of Reckoning shall read’.

There seem, however, to have been Rabbis against whom the same charge could be preferred as against Mark 10 : 6, namely, a use of the expression under notice not in accordance with the strict Biblical account of the creation. Genesis Rabba 5a may be adduced : ‘R. Eleazar taught, From the beginning of his creation of the world the Holy one decreed (the Floods) and said (Genesis 1 : 9), Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together. How ? It is written twice (Amos 5 : 8 and 9 : 6), He that calleth for the waters of the sea and poureth them out upon the face of the earth : one reference is to the generation of the Flood and the other to the generation of Enosh.’ (That there were two Floods, one of them earlier than the familiar Flood, namely, in the time of Enosh, is an old Midrashic view.) In this passage, God is represented as having gathered the waters ‘from the beginning of his creation of the world’, despite the fact that the Bible makes this one of the works of the third day. The same Midrash is recorded in Deuteronomy Rabba 10 (where it is ascribed to R. Jose b. Zimra) and Ecclesiastes Rabba in 3 : 14, and in these two versions the formulation is even clearer : ‘Thus spoke the Holy one from the beginning of his creation of the world, Let the waters be gathered’ in the former, ‘From the beginning of his creation of the world it is said, Let the waters be gathered’ in the latter. (The interpretation of the Midrash here adopted is Bacher’s.¹) A somewhat less plausible way of taking it is to hold that the Rabbis meant to establish a contrast between the gathering of the waters in Genesis 1 : 9 and the pouring out in Amos 5 : 8

¹ See W. Bacher, *Die Agada der Palästinensischen Amoräer*, vol. 2, p. 51.

and 9:6, the two Floods constituting a reversal of the original order. For the purpose of this discussion, it does not matter at all which interpretation is preferred: on either of them, the words 'Let the waters be gathered' were regarded by R. Eleazar as uttered 'from the beginning of his creation of the world'. Obviously, if it could be said that God gathered the waters 'from the beginning of his creation of the world', there is no reason why this phrase should have been inapplicable to the creation of man.

But there is one more highly suggestive point: we find what God did 'from the beginning of his creation of the world' treated by the Rabbis as an indication of what man ought to do. The relevance of this to the matter in hand is obvious. We have here part of the wider background of an argument like Mark 10:6 in its present form. In *Leviticus Rabba* 25 is recorded a discourse of R. Judah b. Simon on *Leviticus* 19:23 ('And when ye shall come into the land, ye shall plant all manner of trees for food'¹): 'R. Judah b. Simon opened his discourse by quoting *Deuteronomy* 13:5, Ye shall walk after the Lord your God. But is it possible for flesh and blood to walk after the Holy one, him of whom it is written in *Psalms* 77:20, Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known? . . . But the explanation is as follows. From the beginning of his creation of the world the Holy one was first occupied with plantation only, as is proved by *Genesis* 2:8, And the Lord planted a garden eastward in Eden: so you also, when you have entered the land, shall first occupy yourselves with plantation only. This is the meaning of *Leviticus* 19:23, And when ye shall come into the land, ye shall plant trees.' When we consider how carefully the comments on the story of the creation were sifted by the compilers and publishers of tradition, it becomes very probable that there once existed many more arguments of this type than would appear from the material handed down to us.² Incidentally,

¹ This is a Rabbinic interpretation of the verse. The English Bible has: 'And when ye shall come into the land, and shall have planted all manner of trees, then . . .'

² A line of thought not dissimilar to that in the section on divorce here under discussion is to be found in *The Testament of Zebulun* 9:4 (see D. Daube,

the plantation of Genesis 2 : 8 is here said to have taken place 'from the beginning of his creation of the world', though, if we rely on the plain sense of the Biblical story, it cannot have occurred before the third day, on which grass, herb and trees were created (Genesis 1 : 11 f.). It is quite possible, however, that R. Judah did not rely on the plain Biblical story but adhered to a theory according to which the garden of Eden was among the first works of creation (see Babylonian Pesahim 54a); a theory perhaps supported by an interpretation of *miqqedhem*, 'eastward', as 'of old', 'And the Lord God planted a garden of old in Eden'.¹

An examination of Rabbinic literature, then, shows that it would be rash to attribute Mark 10 : 6 to a mistranslation and violently assimilate it to Matthew 19 : 4. Precisely what the relationship is between the two texts need not here be discussed. Nor is it necessary to decide whether Mark 10 : 6 uses the phrase 'from the beginning of the creation' loosely, as the equivalent Hebrew is used in Genesis Rabba 5 cited above, or whether we have to interpret more literally. We might, for example, think of some Midrashic speculation ante-dating the creation of man. Several such are preserved, and there must have been more in the Talmudic era. We are told that an ideal creation in God's mind preceded the actual one; that God created everything on the first day, only the various works became manifest or extended in a certain succession; and so on. Another way of taking the term in Mark 10 : 6 literally would be to see in it a reference to the original state of man, when male and female were not yet two separate beings, as opposed to the final state now prevailing. It may be significant that it is precisely the clause 'Male and female made he them',

Theology, 47, p. 67). The patriarch warns his children against political division, against division 'into two heads, since all that the Lord has made has received one head, and two shoulders, two hands', etc. But the term 'from the beginning of the creation' does not occur.

¹The Jerusalemite Targum paraphrases the word by *qodham b'riyyath 'olam*, 'before the creation of the world'; whilst Genesis Rabba 15 affirms that the word means not that Eden was created *qodhem libh'riyyatho shel 'olam*, 'before his creation of the world', but merely that it was created *qodhem l'adam hari'shon*, 'before Adam'.

the clause quoted in Mark 10 : 6, on which the Midrash (which has every mark of great antiquity) rests its teaching of the androgynous man, of the first man who was two, male and female, in one. Mark 10 : 6, should this have to be regarded as relevant, would imply : 'But the very first time that man was created, male and female, in one, made he them.' If the verse was intended to be understood in this way, evidently, the argument against divorce was very powerful indeed. However this may be, to alter Mark 10 : 6 by assuming a mistranslation is, unfortunately, too simple a solution. One remark may be added in conclusion, though it has been made by others before. The fact that Mark 10 : 6 says, 'Male and female made he them', with 'God' as the subject merely implied,¹ should not be urged in justification of emendations (and Torrey does not do it). These words are a literal quotation of Genesis 1 : 27 and 5 : 2, passages with which any Jewish audience, educated or uneducated, was thoroughly familiar : and the insertion of 'God' would have made the reference less rather than more intelligible.

IV. MARK 10 : 12.

The next case to be presented is Mark 10 : 12. Here, indeed, as has long been recognized, we find a saying that can hardly go back to a Jewish environment—though it will be shown that it just conceivably may. But it would be wrong to say, with Torrey, that the flaw was due to a slip of him who translated the Aramaic into Greek. For there still exist some Greek and Latin versions of the passage from which the flaw is absent. Accordingly, if we assume that the saying once was of a more typically Jewish character, the versions adverted to have preserved it intact : and it was changed not in the course of translation, but during its life in Greek. The problem of the relationship between this saying and its parallels, Matthew 5 : 32, 19 : 9 and Luke 16 : 8, cannot be disposed of by declaring the former a mistranslation.

¹ The English Bible says, 'God made them male and female' (so also Luther : *hat sie Gott geschaffen einen Mann und ein Weib*), and there is ancient authority for this. (See the apparatus.) There can be no doubt, however, that the *lectio difficilior*, without 'God', is the better reading.

Mark 10 : 12, to go by the commonest reading, says : ' And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery ' or ' he committeth adultery '. Torrey substitutes : ' And if she who has been divorced by her husband marries another, he committeth adultery. ' The reason he gives is : ' The Jewish woman, at this time, *could not* divorce her husband ; see Josephus, *Ant. Jud.* 15 : 7 : 10, at the beginning. The reading here in Mark was not *pāt' rā l' gabra*, " putting away her husband ", but *p'tirā l' gabra*, " put away by her husband ", and the following verb was masculine. Observe that this is exactly what is said in Luke 16 : 18.¹ Once again, however, there is another side to the matter. Certainly, a Jewish wife under Jewish law could not divorce her husband, and Mark 10 : 12, therefore, sounds odd. Certainly, by emending the passage as Torrey does, we get the same sense as in Luke 16 : 18, or for that matter, in Matthew 5 : 32b and 19 : 9b. Only it seems that, in the case under notice, if we adopt the method outlined, we are suppressing an interesting piece of textual—and general—history.

A Jewish woman under Jewish law could not divorce her husband ; but she could and, apparently, sometimes did run away from him (*halakh, yasa', parash* in Hebrew, *n'phaq, p'rash* in Aramaic).² The possibility is contemplated by Paul in I Corinthians 7 : 10 f. Indeed, the rule that a wife ought not to separate from her husband and that, if she does, she ought not to marry another precedes the rule that a husband must not divorce his wife : ' Let not the wife depart from her husband. But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried . . . and let not the husband put away his wife. ' The point is that there is extant a variant reading of Mark 10 : 12 putting precisely this case. In D, the verse begins : ' And if a woman shall depart from her husband ', not : ' And if a woman shall put away her husband '.³ And, strikingly enough, the same text underlies some versions of the *Itala*. Actually, most of the *codices* known

¹ *The Four Gospels*, pp. 91 and 302 ; see also *Our Translated Gospels*, pp. 93 ff.

² See D. Daube, *Theology*, 47, pp. 65 ff.

³ *καὶ ἐὰν αὐτὴ ἐξέλθῃ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς καὶ ἄλλον γαμήσῃ, not καὶ ἐὰν αὐτὴ ἀπολύσασα τὸν ἄνδρα αὐτῆς γαμήσῃ ἄλλον.*

to the present writer have a text compatible with Jewish law ; namely, MSS. Cantab. (D), Corb., Mun. and Veron., where the phrase used is *exire a viro*, MS. Verc., with *discedere a viro*, and MSS. Bob., Colb. and Holm., with *relinquere virum*. According to Nestle's apparatus,¹ the versions of the *Itala* supporting D are only few ('*pc it*'). Strictly speaking, this is true, since the versions with *relinquere virum* do not really render ἐξέρχασθαι ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀνδρός. They probably go back to a different Greek, lost to us. But the fact here relevant is that *relinquere virum* was possible for a Jewish wife. There is an essential difference between this and *dimittere virum*. Actually, the existence of two Latin forms compatible with Jewish law, pointing to two Greek forms, should render fairly difficult any attempt that might be made to declare all Latin versions of the saying here in question as descended from D, which in turn might be declared as for some reason or other irrelevant. In other words, the existence of different Latin versions compatible with Jewish law seems considerably to strengthen the hand of D.

Clearly, we thus have a basis for a solution far more probable than Torrey's. D and the relevant versions of the *Itala* have preserved the original form of the saying, with the wife not divorcing, but running away from, her husband. The other, commoner reading, with the wife divorcing her husband, was substituted at an early date. Nor is it difficult to see either how this happened or why the new reading almost completely ousted the original form. For one thing, Mark 10 : 11, the verse immediately preceding that here discussed, is directed against the husband divorcing his wife. So, indeed, are all remaining synoptic passages dealing with the subject, Matthew 5 : 32 ; 19 : 9 and Luke 16 : 18. Is it too rash to suggest that Mark 10 : 12 may have been assimilated to these passages, may have been made to refer, like them, to divorcing one's partner instead of to running away from him ? (This would not be the only point where we can notice a tendency to assimilate to one another the various utterances concerning divorce.) For another thing, in the Graeco-Roman world, divorce of the husband by his wife was permissible and frequent.

¹ E. Nestle, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 3rd ed., p. 113.

Consequently, as soon as Mark 10 : 12 fell into Hellenistic hands, the version speaking of the woman divorcing her husband would appear perfectly natural. It may be added that the question whether the saying originally concluded with 'she committeth adultery' or with 'he committeth adultery' is of little moment in this connection.

So far, it has been assumed that the prevalent reading of Mark 10 : 12, with the wife divorcing her husband, could not have originated in a Jewish milieu. One might conceivably argue, however, in favour of its superiority—though it looks rather unlikely. The very story from Josephus quoted by Torrey, one might urge, shows that while Jewish law did not allow a woman to divorce her husband, there were circles in which this occurred. It should be observed that Josephus uses the same verb of Salome's action that is found in Mark. (It is true that he has the middle, ἀπολύεσθαι.) 'She sent him . . . a document, dissolving (ἀπολυμένην) the marriage, contrary to the laws of the Jews', he says of Salome's dismissal of her husband. Moreover, it might be said, there is the case of Herodias. Formally, she did not go quite as far as Salome. She did not, that is, write her husband a bill of divorce but just left him: Josephus records that she was τοῦ ἀνδρὸς διαστᾶσα (*Ant. Jud.* 18 : 5 : 4, 136). Yet she married again while her husband was still alive; and it is strange that such criticism as has come down to us seems directed only against her marrying her husband's brother, not against her re-marrying as such. It is, of course, possible that the crime of incest was considered so monstrous that little mention was made of other weak points about her second marriage; or again, her first husband may have divorced her when she left him. But it remains a remarkable affair.¹

However, like several of Salome's and Herodias' actions, the ones referred to must have been of a very exceptional character—a slender basis for upholding the commoner reading

¹ It is not necessary here to go into details. The difficulties, especially those of a chronological nature, are well known. F. C. Burkitt, *The Gospel History and Its Transmission*, pp. 100 f., takes the saying in Mark as directly referring to the action of Herodias.

in Mark 10 : 12.¹ Besides, if we take the commoner reading, with the wife divorcing her husband, as the better, we shall have to assume that D and the versions of the *Itala* agreeing with it got their text from a source in which the saying had for some reason or other been Judaised. (The possibility of an unwitting alteration with the effect of making the saying Jewish can safely be ruled out.) It is hard to believe in such a secondary harmonisation of the passage with the Jewish ideas on divorce ; and the existence of two different Latin forms consistent with Jewish law, on which something was said above, constitutes an additional obstacle in the way of such an explanation. In any case, without settling the claims of the common reading on the one hand and D and some versions of the *Itala* on the other, we find that Mark 10 : 12 alone of all synoptic passages concerning divorce contemplates the possibility of a wife leaving her husband. According to the commonest reading, the case put is that of divorce of the husband by his wife. This was not recognised in Jewish law ; but it was in Gentile law, and of Salome at least we know that she divorced her husband in spite of what Jewish law said. According to D and a number of versions of the *Itala*, the case put is that of a wife running away from her husband. Of this situation, frequent mention is made

¹ I did not consider the accounts of (a) Salome's divorce and (b) Herodias' offence in the article in *Theology* 47, cited above. The conclusions that I reached there are not substantially affected, save that to the terms occurring in Josephus which I gave in the last paragraph ought to have been added the following : (a) From *Ant. Jud.* 15 : 7 : 10, 259 f. (1) πέμπειν γραμμάτιον ἀπολυομένη τὸν γάμον, 'to send a document, dissolving the marriage', of Salome's illegal action. The same, Josephus remarks, would be legal if done by the husband. (2) προαπαγορεύειν τὴν συμβίωσιν, 'to renounce the marriage', of Salome's illegal action. (3) ἀποστήναι τοῦ ἀνδρός (aorist 2 of ἀφιστάναι), 'to separate from the husband', of Salome's illegal action. More precisely, this term, according to Josephus, was employed by Salome in explaining her step to Herod. It may well be that Josephus chose it in this connection because he thought it unlikely that Salome herself would have described her action as what it was : ἀποστήναι τοῦ ἀνδρός, being intransitive, could be applied to a wife running away from her husband. (4) διαχωρίζεσθαι (passive) καθ' αὐτήν, 'to separate by her own decision', of a wife who runs away from her husband. (5) ἐφίεναι, 'to dismiss', of a husband divorcing his wife. (b) From *Ant. Jud.* 18 : 5 : 4, 136 and 18 : 5 : 1, 110. (1) διαστήναι τοῦ ἀνδρός (aorist 2 of διυστάναι), 'to separate from the husband', of a wife running away from her husband. (2) ἐκβάλλειν, 'to dismiss', of a husband divorcing his wife.

in Rabbinic literature; and it is considered by Paul. The passage thus creates a most intricate problem. To assume a mistranslation and violently assimilate it to Luke 16:18, Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 is no answer: it is evading the real question.

V. MATTHEW 26:64, LUKE 6:27, JOHN 8:26.

In three passages, Matthew 26:64, Luke 6:27 and John 8:26, Torrey holds the particle 'but' to be a mistranslation of an Aramaic word which, he says, could mean this or 'moreover'. The view is not tenable. There is no reason to boggle at the passages in their present form; and the only Aramaic text quoted by Torrey does not show that the Aramaic word which he thinks underlies these 'buts' could mean 'moreover'.

In Matthew 26:64 we are told that, to the high priest's question whether he was the Christ, Jesus replied: 'Thou hast said; but I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power.' Torrey substitutes: 'You say it; moreover I tell you, You shall soon see . . .'. He explains: 'πλὴν, the usual rendering of *b'ram*, is here a mistranslation, for the word meant "moreover", as not infrequently elsewhere (thus in Onkelos Genesis 20:12 it renders Hebrew *gam*).'¹ Similarly, Luke 6:27, as it stands, runs thus: 'But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies.' Torrey prefers: 'Moreover, I say to you who hear . . .'. His comment is: 'The word *b'ram* here meant "moreover also", not "but"; see note on Matthew 26:64.'² There is a third case of mistranslation of *b'ram*, in Torrey's view, John 8:26. In its present form, this verse reads: 'I have many things to say and to judge of you; but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him.' Torrey replaces this by: 'I have many things concerning you to say and to judge; also he who sent me is a sure reliance. . .'. In justification, he remarks: 'See notes on Matthew 26:64 and Luke 6:27.'³ No doubt, in all three cases, Torrey's alteration produces a smoother text. Never-

¹ *The Four Gospels*, pp. 61 and 296.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 128 and 308.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 202 and 323.

theless his thesis can be accepted for none of them. The contrasting particles (πλήν in Matthew, ἀλλά in Luke and John) are perfectly intelligible; in Matthew, 'moreover' can be shown to be most unlikely. Besides, it is doubtful whether *b'ram* would be capable of the meaning required by Torrey at all.

One argument against Torrey's alteration of these passages may be derived from the very fact, just mentioned, that it produces a smoother text. Reading the Bible, the Old Testament or the New, one again and again comes up against a use of conjunctions not entirely in harmony with our academic logic or rhetoric. Admittedly, a Hebrew or Aramaic 'but' has not always the same weight as an English one. Yet the proper procedure surely is to try and acquire some sympathy with that peculiar style, find out what sort of contrast may be at the back of the ancient author's mind. To pick out three passages and change 'but' into 'moreover' cannot be right. Why not add, say, Matthew 11 : 22, 24 and Luke 10 : 14? In these pericopes, curses are pronounced against the heartless Chorazin and Capernaum. The places are compared with Tyre and Sodom. The latter, if they had been allowed to witness the works performed by Jesus, would have repented and survived. At this point, Matthew continues, 'But (πλήν) I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre at the day of judgment, than for you'; and Luke has, 'But it shall be more tolerable . . .'. Would the logic of this not be improved by substituting 'therefore' for 'but'? Maybe it would. But the verses under notice never formed part of a scientific treatise; and their authors saw nothing wrong in putting a conjunction that expressed a remoter idea, an idea not on the surface of the text but easily 'felt' by an audience accustomed to this manner. In a scientific treatise, we should register a gap in the argument. The present writer is not the first to discover this somewhat arbitrary use of conjunctions in the Bible: it looks to him as if the Rabbis had noticed it. This, it is suggested, may well have been one of the factors contributing to the elaboration of the hermeneutic rules of *Ribbui* and *Mi'ut*.¹ The Rabbis, it

¹For a brief description of *Ribbui* and *Mi'ut*, see H. Strack, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, transl. from the 5th German ed., p. 96.

seems, felt uncomfortable about certain conjunctions such as 'aph, gam and 'akh, and concluded that these must have a very special significance. (The rules will be referred to again below, in discussing the Aramaic text, Onkelos Genesis 20 : 12, appealed to by Torrey.) Needless to add, in elevated style, the establishing of contrasts is particularly to be expected. All the three passages attacked by Torrey contain important utterances of Jesus ; none of them, for instance, a mere narrative account of a journey.

If now the three passages are examined singly, there is first Matthew 26 : 64. It is superfluous here to decide whether the reply given by Jesus to the high priest meant 'Yes', 'No', 'Yes and No', 'It is not for me to answer this question' or any of the other nuances that have been proposed. It may be observed, however, that Strack-Billerbeck who, following Dalman, interpret it as a clear 'Yes'¹ proceed from two questionable assumptions. They claim that the words *οὐ εἶπας* equal 'amarta in Hebrew. But though this is conceivable, they may well equal 'atta 'amarta, namely, if we regard *οὐ* as essential, as stressed ; and the difference is very considerable. They further claim that in one Rabbinic text (they admit there is only one, and it has 'amarta, not 'atta 'amarta), in Tosefta Kelim, 'amarta signifies 'You are right, it is so'. But even here the word may be taken as far less emphatic. Simon the Saint, severely reprimanded by Eliezer b. Hyrcanus, says : 'Rabbi, 'amarta'. This seems to mean : 'Rabbi, as thou hast said so, I shall submit.' In any case, what Torrey does is to co-ordinate the two clauses concerned, 'Thou hast said—I say unto you', in an exact, scientific manner, which the text as it stands does not. In fact, he assimilates the text to the Markan version, in sense though not in wording. According to Mark 14 : 62, Jesus declared that he was the Christ in so many words : 'I am ; and ye shall see the Son of man sitting . . .'. Torrey's reconstruction of Matthew 26 : 64 comes to the same : 'You say it ; moreover, I tell you, You soon shall see . . .'. Such assimilation, tempting though it be, is always risky. In this

¹ *Op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 990.

case, everything speaks against it. It is hard to believe that a significant divergence between Matthew and Mark, occurring in one of the most vital scenes of the New Testament, should be due to nothing but a slip on the part of him who translated Matthew into Greek. It is most improbable that if the author of the present Matthew had had before him an Aramaic word capable of being rendered as 'moreover', he would not have gladly availed himself of the opportunity; in other words, most improbable that if he had been enabled by his source to emphasise the reference to the Messiahship in Jesus' reply, he would not have done so.¹ Be that as it may, clearly, we have to choose between two alternatives. Either the author of the present Matthew wanted a solemn, unambiguous affirmation of the Messiahship; in this case, he would have put 'moreover' had there been the slightest authorisation. Or he did not want this; in this case, we can hardly say anything about the (hypothetical) Aramaic original, since he might have put *πλήν* even if the Aramaic had a slightly different conjunction.

Going on to Luke 6 : 27, we find this verse opening a series of injunctions like 'Love your enemies', 'Bless them that curse you'. Several interpretations of the particle 'but' at the beginning of the verse have been attempted. The one apparently most popular at the present time says that while the section immediately preceding the verse under notice is devoted to condemnations of the rich, who are absent, from 6 : 27 onwards it is again the disciples present at the sermon that are addressed. After 'Woe unto you that are full, Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you', 6 : 27 means : 'But to you who are here listening I say, Love your enemies.'² This explanation is quite good enough. (If only we had equally good ones of many 'buts' not rejected by Torrey!) It is worth noting that the rules 'Love your enemies' and so on are introduced by a contrasting particle (*δέ*) also in Matthew, in 5 : 21 ff.; though, indeed, the contrast here is between the old and new ways of

¹ Luther translates Luke 22 : 70 by, *Er sprach zu ihnen : Ihr sagt es, denn ich bin's*, and John 18 : 37 by, *Du sagst es, ich bin ein König*. The A.V. is more reticent.

² See J. M. Creed, *The Gospel according to St. Luke*, pp. 92 f., and E. Klostermann, *Das Lukasevangelium*, 2nd ed., pp. 80 f.

life: 'Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour . . . But I say unto you, Love your enemies.'

There remains John 8:26. The present writer is inclined to take ἀλλά here to mean more or less the same as it means in verse 28. (These variations on a theme are by no means rare in John.) If this is correct, we may paraphrase as follows: 'I have many things to say and judge of you. But it is not ordinary things, not things that I invent myself and you may accept or reject as you please: he that sends me is true and his things I speak.' Bauer would make a different contrast.¹ On his view, we get something like: 'I have many things to condemn at the present. But I have to continue since God is true and I must not make my mission dependent on success or failure; his things I have to speak.' This is certainly a strong possibility. Obviously, there is no reason to despair and violently eliminate 'but' from the text.

So much for the passages concerned themselves. How strong is Torrey's Aramaic position? He says that *b'ram*, of which *πλήν* or ἀλλά is a good rendering, not infrequently meant 'moreover'; this possibility the evangelist-translators seem to have overlooked. The present writer cannot deny that *b'ram* might be used as denoting 'moreover', though he is unable to call any instances to mind and the dictionaries, in so far as they support Torrey's view, are misleading.² Of the one illustration offered by Torrey, at any rate, it must be said that it proves nothing, and this despite the fact that he might have appealed to the authority of Dalman's dictionary.³ Genesis 20:12 is a very special case. The situation is this. Abraham has described Sarah as his sister to Abimelech, Abimelech has taken her into his harem, God has threatened Abimelech and commanded him to return her, and now Abimelech blames Abraham

¹ See W. Bauer, *Das Johannesevangelium*, 2nd ed., pp. 118 f.

² I am preparing a note on the meanings of *b'ram*, in which I hope to show that the particle expresses a contrast even in the few passages where the dictionaries say it does not. Here it will be sufficient to deal with Genesis 20:12, the text relied on by Torrey, and the parallel case of Genesis 30:34 (see below, p. 96).

³ G. Dalman, *Aramäisch-Neuhebräisches Handwörterbuch*, cites this text for *b'ram* in the sense of *auch*, 'also'.

for having wronged him. Abraham replies that he acted from fear of being murdered if he told the truth. This comes in verse 11. But he adds another defence, the claim that he did tell the truth: Sarah is his sister, they have the same father, though not the same mother. (Of course, Abimelech, told by the newcomer that the woman with him was his sister, had concluded that she was no more than that.) The precise logical connection of this second defence with the first is difficult to establish. The Hebrew confines itself to noting the sheer fact that here is a further excuse: 'And also (*w'gham*), really, she is my sister.' The LXX takes a similar line, rendering *w'gham* as *καὶ γάρ*. But Onkelos may have wished to give prominence to a more particular aspect. He may have wished to stress that, though Abraham was prompted by fear, his actual words contained no untruth. If so, *ubh'ram*, 'and yet', was a natural choice: 'And yet, in reality, she is my sister.'¹ By putting 'and yet' he may have intended to make Abraham emphasise that no charge of dishonesty can be preferred against him; 'and also' is weaker. That Onkelos was given to introducing his interpretations into the text in the most subtle manner is well known. In any case, the exact relation between the two defences is obscure, deliberately left obscure by the Bible: we have to remember that the second defence is an instance of a method which, in the ancient world, counted as clever and at the same time not quite fair.² If in these circumstances the Hebrew co-ordinates the clauses concerned by means of 'and also' and Onkelos by means of *ubh'ram*, this does not show that the latter particle could ever be used in the same sense as the former.

As a matter of fact, in the present writer's opinion, there most probably is a deeper reason why Onkelos chose *ubh'ram*. It should be noted that he has another *b'ram* in the same verse: 'And yet (*ubh'ram*) indeed she is my sister, the daughter of my father, only (*b'ram* for the second time, *'akh* in the Hebrew

¹ It is worth remarking that the A.V. goes with Onkelos. Luther, on the other hand, gives a literal rendering of the Hebrew: *Auch ist sie wahrhaftig meine Schwester*. The ambiguity has its root in the incident itself, and there is little point in requiring exactitude of translators in such a case.

² See D. Daube, *Cambridge Law Journal*, 8, p. 75.

text) not the daughter of my mother.' Onkelos disliked using the same word twice in one verse. Where the Hebrew text does it, he preferred to put different, synonymous words (if at all possible) rather than be a faithful reflection of the original.¹ Yet here we find him opening a verse with what is a most offensive *ubh'ram* if repetitions are to be outlawed, whereas the Hebrew has first *w'gham*, 'and also', and then *'akh*, 'yet'. Surely, we have to look for a serious motive. Now Genesis 20 : 12 was a very inconvenient text for the Rabbis. The Rabbis could not admit that Abraham and Sarah had the same father. They could not admit that Abraham, the pious, should have contracted an incestuous marriage, like the ordinary 'children of Noah'. They maintained that Sarah was Abraham's niece, identifying her with Iscah in Genesis 11 : 29. But Genesis 20 : 12 was a stumbling-block. For here Abraham seemed himself to call Sarah his sister. The Rabbis explained that he was not giving the word 'sister' its full force: one's grandchildren are, in a way, like one's children, they argued, and therefore, Abraham's niece, his father's grandchild, was, in a way, like his father's child. It was in this weaker sense that Abraham styled her his sister. This was a highly important matter, which Onkelos would be almost compelled to bring out in his translation. Was there a way of doing it?

There was. Reference has already been made to the hermeneutic rules of *Ribbui* and *Mi'ut*. From a very early date (tradition ascribes the invention of the method to Nahum of Gimzo, and of his pupil Akiba we know that he employed it a great deal), the exegetes assumed that certain particles might have a very special significance beyond the one immediately discernible. Thus the particle *gam*, 'also', was supposed to extend the statement in which it occurred to something not explicitly mentioned. Exodus 19 : 9 reads: 'And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come to thee . . . that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and also (*w'gham*) in thee believe for ever.' The particle *w'gham*, the Rabbis contend, is chosen in order that the prophets coming after Moses be included: in these also the people have to believe. Obviously, the Hebrew opening

¹ See A. Berliner, *Targum Onkelos*, part 2, pp. 211 ff.

of Genesis 20 : 12, 'And also (*w'gham*) she is my sister', was rather awkward for Onkelos; it strengthened the statement whereas he was out to tone it down. The Hebrew particle that would have met all difficulties was '*akh*', 'yet', 'only', *πλὴν*. This particle, for the Rabbis, indicated a limitation not expressed. An early Halakic application of this rule is to be found in the Mekilta on Exodus 31 : 13: 'Yet (*'akh*) my sabbaths ye shall keep.' This verse is interpreted by R. Jose Ha-gelili thus: 'The word '*'akh*' implies a restriction. There are Sabbaths on which thou must rest and there are Sabbaths on which thou mayst not rest (namely, thou mayst not rest if a human life is to be saved).' An illustration from the province of Haggadah is furnished by a comment on Genesis 7 : 23: 'And Noah only (*'akh*) remained alive and they that were with him in the ark.' The Rabbis deduce that Noah did not remain unhurt; from the '*'akh*' it follows that 'even he spat blood because of the cold'. Clearly, it was '*'akh*', *πλὴν*, that the interpreters needed at the beginning of Genesis 20 : 12. 'And yet, '*'akh*', she is my sister': this would provide clear Scriptural proof that she was not his sister in the full sense of the word, this would put right that impossible utterance of Abraham. Here, it is submitted, seems to lie the real reason for Onkelos' use of *ubh'ram*, though it resulted in the same word occurring twice in this verse. This *ubh'ram* by which he regularly translated the Hebrew '*'akh*', by which, indeed, he translated '*'akh*' further on in the very same verse, this *ubh'ram* was designed to suggest—not that the Hebrew text had '*'akh*' (for an alteration of the Hebrew text itself would have been sacrilege) but that the Hebrew text was to be taken as if it had an '*'akh*', as if it had this particle drawing attention to a limitation not expressed. Abraham declared Sarah to be his niece only, not his sister.

Three points may be mentioned in conclusion as supporting this explanation. First, it has been seen for a long time that Onkelos was familiar with, and liked to employ, the methods of exegesis prevalent in Akiba's school.¹ His use of *Ribbui*

¹ See A. Berliner, *op. cit.*, pp. 107 f., 202, 245. There is no need here to inquire whether Berliner is right in using this fact as an argument in favour of an early date of Onkelos.

and *Mi'ut* cannot, therefore, cause any surprise. Secondly, it is important to recall that he manages to make a prohibition of incest of Genesis 2 : 24 : 'Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife.' According to an early Rabbinic view (the names of Eliezer b. Hyrcanus and Akiba appear in this connection),¹ this verse means that a man shall leave, that is to say, not take, his close relatives when he chooses a wife. Onkelos translates nearly literally, but only nearly : 'Therefore shall a man leave the bedroom (*beth mishkabhe*) of his father and his mother . . .'. When we consider that the same expression is used by him in Genesis 49 : 4, the intention becomes quite clear. The latter passage contains Jacob's complaint about Reuben's incestuous commerce with Bilhah, about his 'going up to his father's bed'.² Thirdly, Onkelos, it is submitted, makes exactly the same use of *b'ram* in Genesis 30 : 34 as in the text just analysed. The Bible records how Jacob asked Laban that, in future, if any spotted goats were born amongst the herd entrusted to him, they should be his ; and how Laban accepted the proposal with the words, 'Behold, would it might be according to thy word'. Onkelos renders 'behold' by *b'ram*. Why ? It is well known that the agreement outlined turned out unexpectedly lucrative for Jacob, who did what the French politely describe as *corriger la fortune*. As is natural, the Rabbis claim that he did it in self-defence and that it was Laban who first broke the contract. In fact, according to the Rabbis, the verse quoted, Genesis 30 : 34, proves that Laban lied in the very act of agreeing, or rather, apparently agreeing : the words 'behold, would' are interpreted by them as meaning 'yes—no'. (The Hebrew *hen*, 'behold', is equated with the Aramaic *hen*, 'yes', and the particle *lu*, 'would', is read as *lo*, 'no'.³) 'R. Hiyya the Elder said', we are told in Genesis Rabba 73, 'Everything that Laban arranged with Jacob he retracted ten times even at the outset, for it is written, Yes—no.' Onkelos does not hesitate to follow this tradition, vindicat-

¹ See H. L. Strack-P. Billerbeck, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 802 f. Onkelos is not mentioned, however.

² See A. Berliner, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

³ See J. Levy, *Neuhebräisches und Chaldäisches Wörterbuch*, s.v. *lo*.

ing Jacob's honour at the expense of Laban's. That is why he translates, 'Only (*b'ram*) would it might be according to thy word': Laban, even while he appeared to consent, was already revoking. Once again, *b'ram* is chosen as introducing a limitation not expressed. Onkelos indicates that the word with which Laban opened his statement is to be construed as a case of *Mi'ut*: Laban meant less than he said. To conclude from this passage, as Dalman's dictionary does, that *b'ram* might denote 'certainly' or 'yes' (*gewiss, fürwahr, ja*) is wrong. The Targum's deviation from the Hebrew 'behold' is quite deliberate: by putting *b'ram*, Onkelos makes Laban negate, not emphasise, his acceptance of Jacob's proposal.

The upshot seems to be that, in adducing Genesis 20:12 for *b'ram* in the sense of 'moreover', Torrey has not taken account of the exceptional nature of this case. In this text, at any rate, and in Genesis 30:34 also, not only does *b'ram* not signify 'moreover' but, in all probability, it is put as a most weighty *akh*, 'and yet', *πλὴν*.

VI. MATTHEW 5:48.

The last case from Torrey to be investigated is Matthew 5:48. His assumption of mistranslation is unacceptable. The Aramaic conjectured by him could have neither the meaning that he supposes it originally had nor the meaning that he supposes the translator mistakenly gave it. The passage can be understood without recourse to emendation of any kind.

Matthew 5:48 reads: 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' Torrey substitutes: 'Be therefore all-including (in your good will), even as your heavenly Father includes all.' He comments thus: "'Be therefore perfect", etc., would be mere nonsense, even if it were not wholly unprepared for in this context. Nothing here leads up to the idea of perfection—to say nothing of equalling the perfection of God himself! In this paragraph, vss. 43-47, the disciples are taught that they must show kindness to *all men*; just as their heavenly Father makes no exception. The explanation of the false rendering lies, very obviously, in the fact that

the form of *g'mar* (certainly used here) was active, not passive, in significance. *H'wo gam'rin* (or, *g'mirin*) meant "be all-including", making no exception in your kindliness. (On *g'mir* in the active sense, see e.g. Babylonian Shabbath 63a: "When I was eighteen years of age, I had completed, *g'mir'na*, the whole Talmud"; Babylonian Hagigah 3a: *h'wo g'mire hil'katha*, "they learned all the Halakoth".)¹ This reconstruction, however, does not commend itself. It is impossible because the Aramaic given by Torrey does not signify what he says, and it is unnecessary because the Matthean text as it stands is in line with Rabbinic thinking.

The first objection to be raised against Torrey's view is that his Aramaic will account neither for the original saying postulated by him nor for the mistranslation. In other words, *h'wo gam'rin* or *g'mirin* could never have meant 'be all-including', nor could it ever have been taken as 'be perfect'. Regarding the former point, *g'mar* signifies 'to complete' but not 'to include'. The difference is small but, in this case, of decisive importance. You can 'complete' an action, a work and the like; but if you extend your good will to all men, you do not 'complete' them, you 'include' them. The latter meaning *g'mar* simply has not got. In the two illustrations adduced by Torrey (if, for a moment, his rendering of them be adopted, though something will be said on it presently), 'to complete' and 'to include' are rather near one another: 'to complete' the whole Talmud or all the Halakoth is much the same thing (though not quite the same) as 'to include' them. The verbs are far from synonymous, however, when they take persons as direct objects. 'To complete' a person might be used with reference, say, to God's finishing Adam by giving him a soul. Here *g'mar* would no doubt be suitable. (It could also be employed as signifying 'to destroy' a person or, in the Aphel, 'to teach' a person.) 'To include' a person means something entirely different. Here *g'mar* would not be suitable, which rules out the original saying as conjectured by Torrey. It is seldom wise to affirm the absence of a certain usage from a large body of literature.

¹ *The Four Gospels*, pp. 12 and 291; also *Our Translated Gospels*, pp. 92 ff., 96.

But the present writer feels safe in maintaining that there is not a single instance in Talmud or Midrash where *g'mar* denotes 'to include a person'. It may be added that even if the word did mean 'to include', one would still want some evidence that *h'wo gam'rin* could have the abstract, general sense ascribed to it by Torrey. Even if the word did mean 'to include', that is, to claim that for 'be including everybody in your good will' a preacher in Aramaic might put a mere 'be including' would still be assuming a kind of diction of which there is no trace anywhere in the Sermon on the Mount.

It is to be observed, incidentally, that in neither of the two texts cited by Torrey does *g'mir* signify even 'to complete': it is used in the technical sense of 'to learn', 'to study'. How, in Babylonia, this meaning grew out of the meaning 'to complete' cannot be said with certainty, though Bacher has made a probable suggestion.¹ At any rate, it is 'to learn', 'to study', that *g'mir* signifies both in Babylonian Shabbath 63a and Babylonian Hagigah 3a. In the former passage, R. Kahana declares: 'When I was 18 years old, I had learnt, studied, the whole Talmud, yet I did not know that a verse (outside the Pentateuch) could not depart from its plain meaning.' The latter passage is concerned with the question whether a dumb person is able 'to learn, study' the Law. A story is told of a cure of two dumb people by R. Judah the Prince, whose lectures they had regularly attended for a long time; and it was found that 'they were learning, studying, the Halakoth, Sifra, Sifre and the whole Talmud'. However, this is a minor matter. What is fatal to Torrey's thesis is that *g'mar* does not mean 'to include'.

The next step, according to Torrey, was the mistranslation of *h'wo gam'rin* or *g'mirin* as 'be perfect'. But the phrase could mean this no more than 'be all-including'. Here it seems that Torrey has rashly attributed to *g'mar* the scope of the English 'perfect'. In English, though we speak of 'a perfect scoundrel' just as well as 'a perfect saint', yet the injunction 'be perfect' is quite unambiguous: it means 'be perfect saints'. (Even so, one asks oneself whether this possibility of using 'be perfect'

¹ See W. Bacher, *Die Bibel- und Traditionsexegese Terminologie der Amoräer*, pp. 28 f.

for 'be perfect saints' may not be due precisely to the influence of Biblical texts like Matthew 5 : 48.) But in Rabbinic language, *g'mar* and all other words belonging to the same root are so neutral that the kind of perfection contemplated must always be expressed. A man may be described as *ṣaddiq gamur*, 'a perfect saint', or *rasha' gamur*, 'a perfect scoundrel'. But he can never be described as, or asked to become, *gamur*: it would simply make no sense. There are parallels in English. A man may be called 'a complete (absolute) saint' or 'a complete (absolute) scoundrel', but hardly 'complete (absolute)' without any further explanation; and the injunction 'be complete (absolute)' would be unintelligible. Once again the writer considers it safe to make a sweeping statement; and to say that there is not a single instance in Talmud or Midrash where *g'mar* or any other form of the verb, standing alone, denotes 'to be perfect'.

So far, the criticism advanced has been of a negative kind. The second objection against the reconstruction proposed by Torrey is of a more positive nature: it is submitted that Matthew 5 : 48 in its present form is neither nonsense nor unprepared for in the context—provided the Rabbinic background is taken into consideration. The idea that man ought to imitate God occurs in many religions. It is certainly very old in Judaism. It is at least adumbrated in passages like 'Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy' (Leviticus 19 : 2) or 'Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God' (Deuteronomy 18 : 13). By the time of the Rabbis, it is almost a commonplace. A collection of relevant texts is given by Strack-Billerbeck.¹ Here it will be sufficient to draw attention to some of those in which we find the idea applied in exactly the way it is applied in Matthew 5 : 43 ff.; that is to say, in which to be like God means to be merciful or, even more specifically, to be merciful to all, good and bad, friends and enemies. First, Exodus Rabba 26 is worth mentioning. Commenting on Exodus 17 : 5 ('And the Lord said unto Moses, Go on before the people'), R. Meir said: 'What does *'abhor* ("go on")

¹ *Op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 370, 372 f. and 386; vol. 2, p. 159.

mean? God said to Moses, Be like me: as I repay good for evil, so thou shalt repay good for evil. For it has been said (Micah 7:18), Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by (*w*' *obher*, the same verb as in Exodus 17:5) transgression? Next a discussion in Sifre Deuteronomy of Deuteronomy 11:22 ('To walk in all his—the Lord's—ways') may be quoted. 'It has been said (Joel 3:5), Whoever shall be called by the name of the Lord¹ shall be delivered. But how is it possible for a man to be called by the name of God? The words mean, As God is called merciful and gracious (Exodus 34:6), so thou shalt be merciful and gracious and make gifts to all without reward; as God is called righteous (Psalm 145:17), so thou shalt be righteous; as God is called loving (*ibid.*), so thou shalt be loving. This is why it has been said, Whosoever shall be called by the name of the Lord shall be delivered.' It should be noted that mercy and graciousness are here defined as the readiness to 'make gifts to all without reward'; this is distinctly reminiscent of Matthew. Lastly, there is the story of R. Joshua b. Levi and the Jew who became a Christian and made life difficult for the Rabbi by quoting Scripture for his new faith (Babylonian Berakoth 7a). One night when R. Joshua went to bed, he tied a cock to his bedstead and decided to curse his enemy in the early hours of the morning: that, it seems, would have been a most effective procedure. But he overslept himself, and when he awoke he concluded: 'From this one should learn that it is never seemly to curse, even as it is written (Psalm 145:9),² And his—the Lord's—tender mercies are over all his works, and again (Proverbs 17:26), To punish is not good for the righteous.'³ God's kindness to all his works (the word *ma'ase* used by the Psalmist includes everything

¹ The Midrash points *yiqqare*' instead of *yiqra*'; hence the meaning 'shall be called by' instead of 'shall call on' as in the English Bible.

² In Babylonian Sanhedrin 105b and Babylonian Abodah Zarah 4b, where the same anecdote is told, the reference to Psalm 145:9 is missing. There is no need here to decide whether it was contained in the original form of the story or no. For the purpose of this discussion it is enough to know that the argument of Matthew 5:48 was familiar to the Rabbis.

³ This is a Midrashic interpretation of Proverbs 17:26; the English Bible translates, 'To punish the just is not good'.

created by God) in this anecdote is made the basis for the teaching that one must not hate even a heretic.

But what seems particularly objectionable to Torrey is the use of the adjective 'perfect'. Yet it is clear that, for unsophisticated minds, there existed no inconsistency whatever between the duty to be like God and the duty to acknowledge his majesty, between perfection as an aim and the inevitable failure of all attempts to reach it.¹ In fact, the Rabbis did not hesitate on occasion to call certain people 'perfect' regardless of the doctrine that nobody ever lived without sin. Basing himself on Genesis 17 : 1, 'Walk before me and be thou perfect', a verse the Rabbis early connected with circumcision, Judah the Prince observed (Mishnah Nedarim 3 : 11): 'Great is circumcision, for despite all the commandments that Abraham performed he was not called "perfect" until he was circumcised.' It is quite possible that this remark was directed against the very notion expressed by Matthew 5 : 48, the notion of perfection through the fulfilment of moral ideals only, to the exclusion of ritual.

The question might be asked why Matthew 5 : 48 should insist on 'perfection' while the parallel verse, Luke 6 : 36, says, 'Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful'; a way of putting it not criticised by Torrey. One possible solution might be to take Matthew 5 : 48 not, as the author has done up to this point, as referring only to 5 : 43 ff., but as covering the whole section from 5 : 21 onwards.² In other words, Matthew 5 : 48 may speak of perfection because it contemplates not only the one virtue of loving one's enemies but also the acceptance of all the other principles set forth in 5 : 21 ff., such as freedom from impure desire, abstention from oaths: the verse may be a general summing up, while Luke 6 : 36 clearly

¹ See E. Klostermann, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, 2nd ed., pp. 50 ff. An exhortation to perfection is to be found also in James 1 : 4, though it is not said that it must be the perfection of God. If the passage is an echo of Matthew 5 : 48, it is a very remote one. Dibelius observes (*op. cit.*, p. 73) that in putting τέλει καὶ ὁλόκληροι, 'James worries about the relativity of all human perfection just as little as other authors of wisdom sayings in similar connections; compare Sirach 44 : 17, Wisdom of Solomon 9 : 6, Matthew 5 : 48,

² See E. Klostermann, *loc. cit.*

has regard to the love of enemies and similar virtues only. However, it is quite unnecessary to connect Matthew 5 : 48 with the entire section 5 : 21 ff. The examples cited above from Rabbinic literature distinctly indicate a tendency to regard mercy as God's chief quality ; and to prescribe the exercise of mercy as the conduct bringing man nearest to God, to perfection. It is interesting to find a warning in the Palestinian Talmud against this reduction of God's qualities, and man's struggle to be like God, to the exercise of mercy.¹ 'Those who paraphrase Leviticus 22 : 28 thus', R. Jose b. Abin says, 'My people, children of Israel, as I am merciful in heaven, so you shall be merciful on earth : A cow or ewe, ye shall not kill it and her young both in one day—they do not right, since they make consist the qualities of God² in mercy only.' The paraphrase censured by the Rabbi is still extant, namely, in the Jerusalemite Targum, only that the Targum says 'As our Father is merciful' instead of 'As I am merciful'. (Ought we to treat the paraphrase preserved in the Targum as a proper version of the saying to be found in Matthew 5 : 48 and Luke 6 : 36 ? Ought we to accord it some recognition, beside the passages from the gospels, in considering the oral tradition behind these ? The present writer has never found this possibility contemplated. In any case, R. Jose b. Abin, in attacking the paraphrase, most probably meant to attack also, if not mainly, the Christian attitude.) Manifestly, the ground was well prepared for Matthew's use of 'perfect'. This is not claiming that his version is more original than Luke's.³ The question of priority need not here be raised at all.

In view, then, of the Rabbinic passages adduced, to which others could be added, Matthew 5 : 48 appears to be in order. God loves both the just and unjust : man must do the same, and thus be perfect like God. This is a line of thought with which the Jewish readers of Matthew at any rate were well

¹ See H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 159, and vol. 3, p. 399.

² One of the two versions in which this dictum is preserved has 'the commandments of God'.

³ J. M. Creed, *op. cit.*, pp. 95 f., prefers Luke, arguing that Matthew has a liking for τέλειος.

acquainted. It has already been noticed that, for the evangelists, there can have existed no inconsistency between the call to be like God and true humility. One further point, however, may be mentioned in conclusion. According to Torrey, the argument of Matthew 5 : 43 ff. runs as follows : (1) Ye have heard, Thou shalt love thy neighbour. (2) I say, Love your enemies. (3) That ye may be the children of your Father, who sendeth rain on the just and unjust. (4) For if ye love them which love you, do not even the publicans the same ? (5) Be therefore all-including like God. Admittedly, point 5 constitutes a perfectly logical conclusion (though, as has been shown, a conclusion no more logical from a Rabbinic point of view than the traditional one). But it is a good deal duller, a good deal less dynamic, than the ending as it stands : Be therefore perfect like God. It is duller and less dynamic even than Luke's ending of the corresponding section, 6 : 36 (not questioned by Torrey) : Be therefore merciful like God. This fact alone would make one hesitate to approve of the emendation.

VII. ' IMPROVING ' THE ETHICS OF THE GOSPELS

The method of conjecturing an Aramaic original with a different sense from the Greek is particularly dangerous where religious issues are involved. The present writer is not competent to examine the respective merits of various schools of theology. But a word of warning from the purely philological point of view may not be out of place. It is a sound principle in dealing with an ancient work (to be sure, it must be applied with caution), if one has to choose between two readings, to prefer that which must have been less agreeable to the public interested in the work. On the basis of this principle, future historians having before them a Greek supported by old textual evidence but theologically inconvenient and an Aramaic attained by conjecture but theologically pleasing will do well to rely on the former and disregard the latter. Obviously, a modernisation of the ethics of the gospels by postulating a suitable Aramaic is a game as easy as unsafe. (It is also, of course, superfluous.) A very slight misinterpretation by the Greek translator will account for the death of the Gadarene swine. (Lest the follow-

ing be misunderstood, however, the writer should perhaps adopt the method that he found used in an edition of Molière. There a footnote is attached to the conversation between Argan and the two Diafoirus's, saying : *C'est comique.*) The Aramaic word used to describe what happened in Matthew 8 : 32, Mark 5 : 13 and Luke 8 : 33 was *tuph*. This verb could indeed be employed as signifying 'to be drowned'. In Mishnah Aboth 2 : 7 we are told how Hillel, on seeing a skull floating in the water, exclaimed : 'Because thou drownedst (*di'atēphī*), they drowned thee (*atīphukh*), and at last they that drowned thee (*m'tayphayikh*) shall be drowned (*y'tuphun*).' The Greek translator, therefore, proceeded from *tuph* in this application : hence the present text. But the proper meaning of *tuph* is 'to swim' ; and the translator ought to have taken it in this sense and said, not that 'they were choked in the sea', but that 'they swam in the sea'.